

Inquiries of the Ministry

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Following notice from the hon. gentleman, a report was secured from Victoria at two o'clock this afternoon. This report indicates that there has been serious flooding in three areas due to the runoff of snow and heavy rains. That flood reached a maximum late yesterday afternoon. The areas affected were the Fraser valley, the Vancouver north shore area and the Duncan-Cowichan lake area of Vancouver island. A number of dams are spilling over in one or more of these areas.

The municipal and provincial authorities have been dealing with the emergency conditions and seem able to deal with the problem locally. The army was called upon to assist at Duncan and has had a platoon of regular troops there from ten o'clock last night. The militia has assisted from time to time at certain other places. The army has provided some sandbags to supplement those supplied by the department of highways, and the information is that there are ample supplies available to meet whatever conditions may be expected. A number of people have been evacuated from the low-lying areas.

The minister of highways of British Columbia has stated that there is fairly extensive damage to highways. Both the main railway lines in the Fraser valley have been cut by the flood, and the P.G.E. line has been similarly affected. The Hope-Princeton highway remains open, but there is some danger that it too may be unfit for travel shortly. It is still too early to estimate the damage.

One life has been lost, and I am sure I speak for all members of the house when I extend the sympathy of hon. members to the people in the areas affected as well as to those who suffered damage or who are bereaved.

Mr. Regier: In expressing thanks to the Prime Minister for his very detailed and adequate reply I should like to direct a related question to the Minister of Public Works. Will the government now reconsider its advice to me as given by the minister in a letter dated January 6, and immediately convene a meeting of all three levels of government for the purpose of arriving at a mutual solution to the problem caused by the rapid and repeated flooding of the Coquitlam river?

Hon. D. J. Walker (Minister of Public Works): This problem is entirely concerned with flood relief and prevention, since navigation is not involved. Only at times when flooding is of such seriousness as to constitute a national disaster does the federal

[Mr. Regier.]

government become a party when requested to do so by the provincial government. Consequently this government cannot properly convene a meeting of the three levels of government, as suggested now by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam. Over a year ago in a letter dated August 19, 1959, the Department of Public Works has suggested a remedy to the hon. member.

Mr. Regier: Is it the contention of the government even at this date that Kanaka creek is a navigable river, while Coquitlam river is not?

COMBINES**PULPWOOD—STATEMENT ON REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION INTO ONTARIO PRICES**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, on December 21, the hon. member for Port Arthur asked whether any petitions or requests have been received for an investigation in northwestern Ontario similar to the one conducted two years ago in Quebec and eastern Ontario into prices of farm or settlement pulpwood.

I am now informed by the director of investigation and research under the Combines Investigation Act that one complaint of a preliminary nature was made to the director in the latter part of 1957, the main purpose of which was to ascertain from the director what information he would require before considering himself placed upon inquiry under the Combines Investigation Act.

This discussion referred to the pulpwood industry in the Port Arthur-Fort William area, and was not subsequently followed up with the director. Neither I nor the director have received any other petitions or requests in relation to the matter raised by the hon. member.

Mr. Hubert Badanai (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Forestry. Can the minister inform the house whether he has received a letter from the president of the united pulpwood farmers' association of the district of Thunder Bay complaining about the price of pulpwood being paid to farmers? If so, would the minister, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Fort

Hon. H. J. Fleming (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Fort William was kind enough to send me notice of his question. In answer to the first part of the question, I have received such a letter from the president of the united pulpwood farmers' association of the district of Thunder Bay.